

TOP SECRET 302343Z AUG 71 SENSITIVE EXCLUSIVE
BUNKER CHANNELS
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER
TO: AMBASSADOR BUNKER
CITE: WHS1090

SITUATION ROOM

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AUGUST 30, 1971

TO: AMBASSADOR BUNKER
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER

1. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CABLE (SAIGON 0818). I AM GLAD THIEU IS GRAPPLING WITH THE PROBLEM AND YOUR ASSISTANCE TO HIM IN THE DIFFICULT PROCESS HAS BEEN INVALUABLE.
 2. THE PRESIDENT FEELS THAT YOU SHOULD EMPHASIZE TO THIEU THE GREAT NEED TO DO SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE BEFORE CONGRESS RECONVENES ON SEPTEMBER 7. IF WE ARE NOT ON FIRM FOOTING BY THAT TIME A REAL STORM COULD BREAK AND WE COULD FIND OURSELVES NAKED IN THE FACE OF IT. WE MUST NOT OVERESTIMATE THE EMOTIONAL STAMINA HERE IN SUCH A SITUATION. THIEU SHOULD NOT MISTAKE THE RELATIVE QUIET WHICH PREVAILS NOW AS AN INDICATION OF SUPPORT.
 3. THE REAL CHOICE SEEMS TO BE BETWEEN POSTPONING THE ELECTIONS (OPTION B) OF A REFERENDUM (OPTION C). IF THERE ACTUALLY WERE A REASONABLE CHANCE OF GETTING REASONABLE CANDIDATES, POSTPONING WOULD HAVE SOME ADVANTAGES. IF NOT, THEN A REFERENDUM WOULD SEEM PREFERABLE. WE WILL RELY ON YOUR JUDGMENT TO BALANCE THE PROLONGATION OF UNCERTAINTY AGAINST THE PROBLEM OF CHANGING TO A REFERENDUM OF RELATIVELY SHORT NOTICE. YOU HAVE OUR FULL CONFIDENCE.
 4. IF THIEU'S ANNOUNCEMENT WERE COUPLED WITH AN EXPRESSION OF HIS WILLINGNESS TO RESIGN WHEN PEACE IS ACHIEVED, IT WOULD STRENGTHEN THE CASE EVEN MORE.
 5. WHATEVER HIS DECISION WE CLEARLY DO NOT WANT TO SEE A PROLONGED PERIOD OF INSTABILITY WHICH CAN ONLY RESULT IN EROSION OF SUPPORT HERE AND BENEFIT TO THE OTHER SIDE THERE.
 6. HAVE YOU TOLD THIEU OF THE LAST PARIS MEETING AND DOES HE KNOW THAT WE PLAN ANOTHER ON SEPTEMBER 11? I DO NOT WANT TO THROW THIS INTO THE POT NOW BUT WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU COULD LET ME KNOW BY RETURN CABLE WHETHER YOU HAD ALREADY INFORMED THIEU OF EITHER OF BOTH OF THESE MATTERS.
 7. THE PRESIDENT HAS ASKED ME AGAIN TO CONVEY TO YOU HIS APPRECIATION AND EXPRESSION OF FULL CONFIDENCE. IN THE FACE OF ALL THE NEWSPAPER STORIES YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT YOU HAVE THE RESPECT AND SUPPORT OF THE WHITE HOUSE. WE ALL ADMIRE YOU AND THE SUPERB JOB YOU ARE DOING.
- WARM REGARDS.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

TOP SECRET